



ACTIVE

PARKINSONS DISEASE

WHAT IS PARKINSONS DISEASE?

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive **neurological condition** that affects movement. It occurs when the brain produces **less dopamine**, a chemical responsible for smooth, coordinated movement. As dopamine levels decrease, **movements can become slower, smaller, and stiffer**. Currently **150,000 Australians** live with PD and **10 million globally**.

While **tremor** is the most recognised symptom, it's often not the most limiting. People living with Parkinson's may experience slower movement, **muscle stiffness, shuffling steps, balance difficulties, fatigue** and a softer voice. It can make **simple daily tasks more challenging**, such as washing and drying hair, gardening, getting up from a chair or getting in and out of the car. These can all be really **frustrating and debilitating** for those living with PD.



COMMON MYTHS

“People with Parkinson's should avoid exercise”

When appropriately prescribed, exercise can be beneficial in helping to improve balance and coordination, increase strength and decrease functional decline.

“Parkinson's is only a physical condition”

PD has stereotypically been labelled as a physical condition due to the media depiction of tremors; however, Parkinson's also affects individuals cognitively, causing sleep disturbance and mental health decline. Exercise can also help improve non-physical symptoms, such as the ability to manage and reduce fatigue, improving sleep quality, and increasing overall mental health.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Parkinson's **affects everyone differently**, which is why **exercise needs to be individualised** to the things that matter most to the person. Parkinson's management through exercise should focus on increasing strength, dual tasking and balance training, and **“BIG & LOUD”** movements that focus on big actions and using the voice loudly.

Utilising **music is important for PD rehabilitation**, as music, particularly **rhythmic music** — provides an external timing cue. This helps **“bypass” the impaired internal rhythm system** in the brain and supports smoother, more coordinated movement. An **Accredited Exercise Physiologist (EP) understand neurological conditions** and how to safely prescribe exercise for Parkinson's. They assess movement, strength, balance, and functional ability, then design a tailored program that evolves as symptoms change.

The goal isn't just fitness. It's maintaining independence, confidence, and quality of life.

HOW TO BOOK & FIND OUT MORE

Book online today at YAWA Aquatic Centre
<https://www.yawa.com.au/train/exercise-physiology>

Call to book **(03) 5982 6000** with an Exercise Physiologist

Scan QR Code





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RESOURCES & REFERENCES

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/parkinsons-disease>

<https://www.lsvtglobal.com/LSVTBIG>

<https://www.parkinsons.org.au/statistics/>

<https://www.parkinsons.org.au/information-hub/exercise-physiologist/>

Thaut, M. H., McIntosh, G. C., Rice, R. R., Miller, R. A., Rathbun, J., & Brault, J. M. (1996). Rhythmic auditory stimulation in gait training for Parkinson's disease patients. *Movement disorders : official journal of the Movement Disorder Society*, 11(2), 193–200. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mds.870110213>